

HB 1151 2023

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Bill Helphrey

I am asking for a do not pass recommendation on this bill.

This bill is being referred to as the "baiting bill". I am not going to argue whether baiting ethics are good or bad. I understand what some of those that are asking passage of this bill are asking for. As an example, being able to set up a blind for a physically challenged veteran is a noble effort. As a veteran I can relate to that.

The portion of the bill I am opposed to is the passing of legislation that will tell the Game & Fish what they can and cannot do.

In 1930 the North Dakota legislature created the North Dakota Game & Fish department with the expressed mission of taking care of the publicly owned wildlife in this state. Their job is to manage the fur, fish and feathers so that those that come after us can also enjoy the fact that we have wildlife in this state. The Game & Fish has been managing the wildlife in this state for 90 years. They have the experts in wildlife management. If they feel that baiting restrictions will at least slow down the spread, we should listen to them. Their experts in the field have contacts with other states and Canadian Provinces that have dealt with disease spread and if they feel baiting restrictions will help contain or at least slow down a communicable disease we should do so.

You may recall when several years ago Minnesota had a bovine tuberculosis outbreak just across the river from Grand Forks. Bovine TB is spread by bacteria in moisture transfer from one animal to another. The Minnesota Game & Fish destroyed every deer they could find in the neighboring counties to help prevent the spread of the disease. The North Dakota Game & Fish was considering baiting restrictions to

prevent the spread in North Dakota. A legislator from the Grand Forks area said something to the effect” Why would we bother with it now; we should wait to see if it gets here then do something.” I have listened to some comment that we don’t have dead CWD deer laying around so why are we restricting baiting. If we wait until there are dead deer lying around, it will be too late. You can’t un-ring a bell.

When your vehicle doesn’t work you take it to the repair shop, when you need a tooth taken care of you go to the dentist. So, tell me, are we the “armchair quarterbacks”, better off passing legislation to manage the wildlife in North Dakota, or should we listen to the agency which was created to manage the wildlife in North Dakota and has the expertise to do so.

We should not pass laws based on emotion.

Recommend a do not pass on this bill

Let the North Dakota Game & Fish department do their job.